

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program



# DINING ON A DIME

## Eating Better for Less

June / July

### Join a New Kind of “Clean Plate” Club

This issue of *Dining on a Dime* is focused on a new meaning of the phrase, “Clean your plate.” We’re suggesting ways to “clean up” your diet by encouraging you to eat more foods as they occur in nature. Some of these you could eat raw, and others should be gently cooked. One of the best ways to stretch your food dollars and increase the likelihood of a healthy life span is to eat more foods that are minimally processed. Below are our five favorite ways to eat more healthful, whole and unrefined foods.



**Eat more vegetables and fruits.** Especially, look for fresh ones or those with ingredient labels that show they have no added sugars or salt.

**Buy local.** If you don’t have your own garden, consider a weekly trip to a farmers market or roadside stand this summer. When you buy locally raised vegetables and fruits, they are likely to be very fresh. If you buy eggs, cheese and meats at the market, be sure to keep them cold until you can get home and put them in the refrigerator. Read page 2 for tips on saving money at farmers markets.

**Buy from bulk bins.** When possible, buy whole grains (such as oats, whole wheat flour, and brown rice), nuts and seeds (including popcorn seeds) from large bins that price by weight. These are usually less expensive than the same product packaged, and generally have no added ingredients. Store these foods at home in containers with tight-fitting lids.

**Make your own healthy baked goods.** Many food dollars and excess calories, added sugars, saturated fat and trans fat come from the sweet baked goods that we splurge on. Make a family rule to only indulge in these treats when you make them at home. Look online for healthy recipes, such as at [recipefinder.nal.usda.gov](http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov). Then check your pantry for the needed ingredients. Freeze extras for later use.

**Purchase fewer highly processed foods.** Two good general rules are to:

1. Look for foods with no ingredient labels, or with ingredient labels showing as few added sugars and hard-to-pronounce words as possible.
2. Read Nutrition Facts labels and buy foods with large serving sizes but that are low in calories, sodium, saturated fat and trans fat.

## Save on Food Costs while Supporting Local Farmers



This issue of *Dining on a Dime* encourages you to eat more foods as they occur in nature ... so we invite you to savor these savings tips at your local farmers' market, roadside stand or you-pick farm or orchard:

**Be flexible.** Plan your menus based on the abundance of crops available during the growing season. Go with a shopping list, but be willing to alter it if you find other foods offered for better deals.

**Buy at the peak of the season.** The first or last foods of the season always costs the most. Buy foods when they are at the growing season's peak weeks, when their taste is

at its best and the competition between farmers lowers prices. In Kansas, the June growing season includes harvests of: beans, beets, berries, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, most greens, green onions, peas, radishes, squash and turnips. Visit [www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mf2647.pdf](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mf2647.pdf) for a more complete listing.

**Get to know your local farmers.** Many times the people selling products at the market are the same people who grow the food. Let them know about the items that you've enjoyed in the past, and ask questions about their farm. Enjoy their company a little, and share a smile. If you're not sure how to prepare an unusual fruit or vegetable, ask the farmer for some tips. He or she may even have printed recipes available for you to take home.

**Buy in bulk, if possible.** Large amounts of fresh produce are sold at their lowest price of the year during the peak weeks of that fruit or vegetable's growing season. For example, apples, berries, green beans, peaches, sweet corn and tomatoes can often be bought in bulk amounts at a very good price in June and July.

Consider getting together with family and friends to purchase a bushel or two of these fresh vegetables or fruits when they are at a low price during the peak weeks of the season. Then, divide up the wonderful food that you purchased.

Or, if you are willing and able to preserve these foods by freezing, canning or drying them, consider purchasing some extra quantities for your family to enjoy later in the year. By buying them when they are at their lowest price during the peak growing season, you could enjoy the savings all year. For instance, the price of berries is about half as much in the summer as in the winter. If you and your family enjoy smoothies for a treat, and you have extra room in your freezer, purchase a few more pounds of berries when they are on sale, freeze, and enjoy them long after the season peaks. (Read page 3 for information on how to freeze fruits and vegetables.)

**Buy at the end of the day.** Farmers don't want to have to haul unsold produce home, so you may be able to shop late and net a "don't-want-to-pack-it-up" bargain!

Source (Accessed 5/22/2012): [Save Money at a Farmers' Market](http://www.wikihow.com/Save-Money-at-a-Farmers-Market), Wikihow, at [www.wikihow.com/Save-Money-at-a-Farmers-Market](http://www.wikihow.com/Save-Money-at-a-Farmers-Market)

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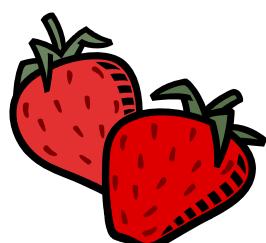
## **How to Freeze Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

Do you wish that you could save part of your summer this year? Keep reading to learn how to at least to save part of your fresh produce. When freezing foods at home, remember to:

1. Freeze fresh produce as quickly as possible, preferably within 24 hours of harvest or purchase. Choose fruits and vegetables that are in good condition, ripe and free of mold. Cut out any portions with insect damage or bruises.
2. Rinse off all dirt under cool running water.
3. Choose an up-to-date tested recipe, such as from the National Center for Home Food Preservation website: [nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html)  
Or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office for how-to details.  
Follow the recipe directions exactly. For example:
  - a. Follow recommended times for blanching and cooling, if needed. Blanching involves putting certain kinds of vegetables in boiling water or steam for a short time, in order to prevent loss of flavor, color, texture and nutrients during frozen storage.
  - b. If recommended, add lemon juice or powdered ascorbic acid or citric acid to prevent darkening. Fruits such as apples, apricots, peaches and pears darken when cut and exposed to air.
  - c. If using a sugar substitute, choose a recipe designed for use with it rather than with sugar, in order to be assured of success.
4. Use food storage containers designed for freezing foods.
5. Label and date foods. Use them within 8 to 12 months.



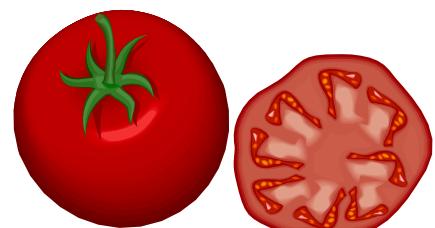
### **Example #1: How to Freeze Ripe Strawberries without Added Sugar**



1. Read step number 1, above.
2. Rinse berries and remove stems. Slice or leave whole.
3. Place berries in a single layer in a shallow baking pan. Place pan in freezer.
4. When berries are frozen, transfer to freezer containers. Seal, label and date. Place in freezer. Use within one year.

### **Example #2: How to Freeze Ripe Tomatoes for Later Use in Cooking**

1. Read step number 1, above.
2. Rinse any dirt from tomatoes. Dip into boiling water for 30 seconds to loosen skins. Remove skins and core. Slice into pieces or leave tomatoes whole.
3. Place into freezer containers, leaving one inch of space at the top. Seal, label and date. Place in freezer. Use within one year.



For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.

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## *Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner*

### **Black Bean Veggie Burgers**

**(Makes 2 servings of 2 burgers for each serving)**

#### **Ingredients**

1 can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained  
1 raw egg  
3/4 teaspoon garlic powder (or more, if desired)  
3/4 teaspoon chili powder (or more, if desired)  
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin (or more, if desired)  
1/2 cup chopped sweet bell pepper or summer squash  
1/2 cup finely chopped onion  
1/3 cup dry bread or cracker crumbs, or cornmeal

#### **Directions**

1. Wash your hands and work area.
  2. On a plate, mash beans thoroughly with a sturdy fork.
  3. In a mixing bowl, mix all ingredients except bread crumbs.
  4. Stir in bread crumbs.
  5. Form mixture into four patties.
  6. Spray a skillet with non-stick cooking spray.
  7. Over medium heat, cook patties for 4 to 5 minutes on each side, until browned.
  8. Serve hot.
  9. Cover and refrigerate, or freeze, leftovers promptly.
- Nutrition Facts** for 2 patties: 290 calories, 4.5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 47 g carbohydrate, 17 g protein, 95 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium and 13 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 10% vitamin A, 50% vitamin C, 10% calcium, 25% iron.



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